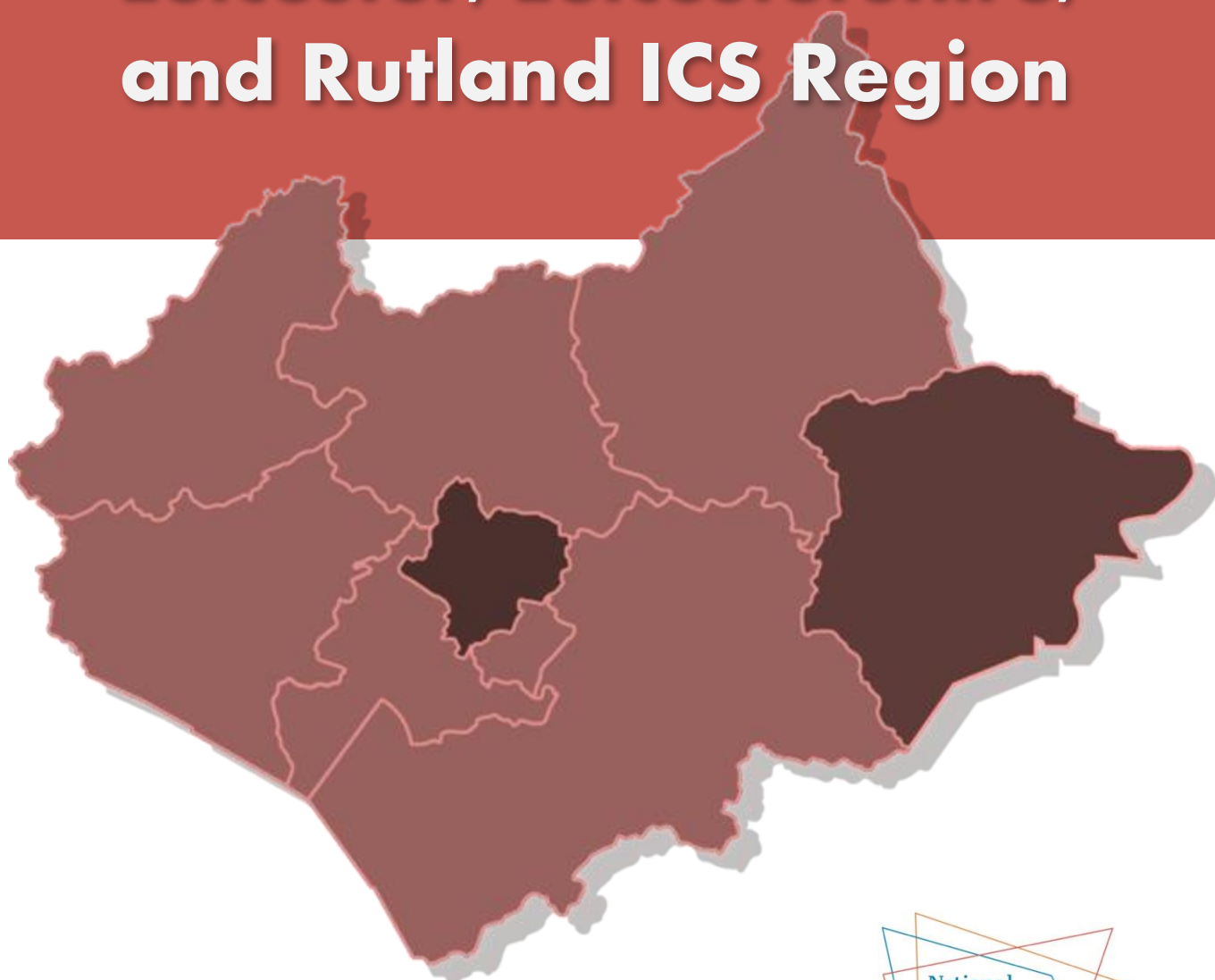


Creative Health in the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland ICS Region



Foreword

In July 2023, The [National Centre for Creative Health \(NCCH\)](#) launched its Creative Health Associates Programme, funded by Arts Council England. This saw the introduction of seven [Creative Health Associates](#), each of whom represent a different NHS region.

The role of a Creative Health Associate is to connect into healthcare systems and advocate for Creative Health at a senior level. The aim of the programme is to deliver a step-change in embedding Creative Health across the health and care system in England.

In the Midlands NHS Region, [Jane Hearst](#) is the Creative Health Associate. The Midlands region contains 11 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), one of which is Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS. An Integrated Care System is a local partnership between NHS, Local Authorities, and other organisations that work together to improve health and care services.

The people and programmes highlighted in this resource are a selection of those that Jane has connected to during her time in this role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything happening in the area. Highlighted profiles have been selected from health systems, network groups, and those featured in the cultural strategy, rather than other important Creative Health stakeholders working at the grassroots level.

The resource is intended to support local Creative Health advocates to feel better informed about the state of Creative Health strategy and leadership in their local systems. Over the following pages you will find: 1) key health terms, 2) an introduction to key people and initiatives, 3) two narrative overviews of the region, and 4) a selection of resources which will support the development of strategic thinking and bid-writing.

This resource was created in January 2025 and the contacts spotlighted were gathered over a 16-month period. The Creative Health scene is forever growing and evolving, so this is simply a snapshot in time to share some of the insights that Jane has gathered during her role.



Photo credit: Pruga P



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Key Terms



Creative Health | NCCH defines Creative Health as creative approaches and activities which have benefits for our health and wellbeing. This includes targeted interventions (such as singing for lung health) and community activity (which has been shown to impact length of life and wellbeing). It also includes innovative ways of developing healthcare cultures to be more person-centred and to support the wellbeing of the healthcare workforce. Creative Health has a part to play in making our healthcare more preventative and accessible, our healthcare systems more effective, and the health of our neighbourhoods more equal.

Integrated Care System (ICS) | The 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) in England are local partnerships that unite health and care providers to create collaborative plans and services. Each ICS is made up of NHS partners and local councils, along with the voluntary sector and social care providers, who work together to enhance the health and well-being of their communities.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) | The committee of leaders in each ICS is called an ICP. Each ICP must develop a long-term strategy to improve health and social care services and people's health and wellbeing in the area. They may also take on additional responsibilities, as agreed locally between the members.

Integrated Care Board (ICB) | These are the NHS organisations responsible for planning health services for their local population. There is one ICB in each ICS area. They manage the NHS budget and work with local providers of NHS services, such as hospitals and GP practices, to agree a **a five-year Joint Forward Plan (JFP)** which says how the NHS will contribute to the ICP's integrated care strategy.

Public Health | Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organised efforts of society. Public Health teams work at a population level to protect and improve the health of communities. Their aim is to prevent threats to health and wellbeing by addressing factors like social determinants of health, health inequalities, and environmental conditions that influence well-being. These teams are often part of local councils or government agencies rather than the NHS, and they collaborate with a wide range of sectors—housing, education, and community organizations—to implement health-promoting policies, run outreach programs, and gather data to guide public health strategies.

NHS Trusts | NHS Trusts work at the patient level, providing direct clinical services, including hospital, mental health, and community health services. Trusts operate at the frontline of healthcare delivery, ensuring access to treatment, managing patient care pathways, and offering specialised medical services. They are funded and regulated by the NHS but function semi-independently to meet the needs of their local populations, often in collaboration with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and other health and social care providers.

NHS England | This was the national body responsible for overseeing the strategic direction, planning, and delivery of healthcare in England. In March

2025, the Government announced that NHS England would be abolished to cut bureaucracy.

VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise) Alliances | These refer to partnerships and networks that bring together a range of local, non-profit organizations, including charities, faith groups, community interest companies, and social enterprises. Unlike NHS Trusts or public health teams that operate within the formal healthcare system, VCFSE Alliances provide community-based services and support that address broader social needs, such as social inclusion and community resilience. These alliances work closely with health and care systems to complement clinical services, offering person-centred, culturally sensitive support. Creative Health services often fall within these Alliances.

Place Based Partnerships (PBP) | PBPs sit within the ICS. They design and deliver integrated services for the public, at the level of place. This might be a particular town or borough. Like the ICP, PBPs involve a range of people interested in improving health and care, including the NHS, local councils, the VCFSE sector, and other local organisations, working alongside local people.

Provider Collaboratives | These bring together providers of local services to plan, deliver and transform. They are partnership arrangements of at least two trusts, working across multiple places with a shared purpose. For example, NHS England has asked all acute and mental health trusts to be part of a provider collaborative, and some include independent providers.

Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) | These are statutory partnerships within local authorities in the UK, established to promote greater integration and coordination. HWBs bring together leaders from delivery organisations to assess local health needs and set priorities for improving health outcomes. Together, they develop **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies**.

Social Prescribers/ Link Workers/ Community Connectors | These are roles designed to bridge the gap between clinical services and community-based support. Unlike clinical professionals who provide medical treatment, these workers support individuals in addressing non-medical factors that influence health and well-being, such as social isolation, financial concerns, and lifestyle challenges. Through ‘**Social Prescribing**,’ they connect individuals to resources like support groups, exercise programs, volunteering opportunities, and mental health services within the community. Typically, they are employed by NHS services, local councils, or VCFSE organizations. They work closely with GPs, public health teams, and community groups to empower the public to take control of their health via local support networks.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) | This is a central government department in the UK responsible for setting national health and social care policies, allocating funding, and overseeing the overall strategy of healthcare services. Unlike NHS England, which manages day-to-day NHS operations, the DHSC shapes the policy framework that guides health and social care across England. It develops legislation, supports public health initiatives, and ensures that services are safe, sustainable, and meet the needs of all citizens.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) | This is a UK government department responsible for a wide range of areas that impact social and community well-being, including digital policy, cultural initiatives, media regulation, and sports development. While DCMS is not directly involved in healthcare, it plays a significant role in promoting health and well-being through initiatives that encourage participation in culture, arts, sports, and digital literacy. By recognizing the link between cultural engagement, active lifestyles, and health outcomes, DCMS contributes to broader strategies aimed at enhancing public health and improving quality of life across communities.

Population Health Management (PHM) | This is an approach to healthcare delivery. Unlike individual patient care, PHM uses data to identify trends, health risks, and inequalities across specific populations. It enables health and care providers to target interventions, allocate resources effectively, and implement preventative measures that reduce the need for more intensive care.

Personalised Care | This is an approach within the UK healthcare system that tailors health and social care services to an individual's unique needs, preferences, and values.

Social Determinants of Health | These are the conditions in which individuals are born, grow, live, work, and age, that significantly influence their health outcomes. These determinants include a wide range of factors such as economic stability, education access and quality, healthcare availability, neighbourhood and built environment, and social and community context.

The Health Inequalities Agenda | This refers to coordinated efforts and strategic initiatives aimed at reducing health disparities among different population groups. This agenda recognises that health inequalities are rooted in systemic factors such as socioeconomic status, race, geography, and access to services, and it seeks to address these disparities through targeted policies and interventions. It involves collaboration among various stakeholders, including NHS organizations, local authorities, public health teams, and VCFSE groups, to implement initiatives that promote equitable access to healthcare, improve social determinants of health, and empower communities. By prioritizing the health inequalities agenda, practitioners aim to create healthier populations by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve optimal health, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Core20Plus5 | This is a national approach launched by NHS England to reduce healthcare inequalities at national and system level. The 'Core20' refers to the 20% most deprived populations, as measured by the National Index of Multiple Deprivation, 'PLUS' highlights ICS-chosen population groups which may not be captured in the Core20, and the '5' refers to five clinical areas which requires accelerated improvement: Maternity, Severe Mental Illness, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Early Cancer Diagnosis and Hypertension.

The Major Conditions Strategy | This is a framework developed by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to enhance the management and

prevention of key chronic and acute health conditions that significantly impact population health. This strategy focuses on six major conditions: cancers, cardiovascular disease (including stroke and diabetes), musculoskeletal disorders, dementia, chronic respiratory disease, and mental ill health. It aims to improve early diagnosis, provide effective treatment pathways, and enhance support services for individuals living with these conditions.

Primary Care | This is usually the first point of contact for individuals seeking healthcare services. It includes GPs, Community Pharmacists, Dental services and Optometrists.

Secondary Care | This refers to services provided by specialised health professionals, often in hospitals, including urgent and emergency care as well as planned care and mental health services. More specialised services, such as neurosurgery or transplant services are often referred to as ‘tertiary care’

Community Health Care | This covers a wide range of services such as district nursing, child health services, sexual health services, community rehabilitation. Community health teams support people with complex and long-term health and care needs to live independently. Services are mainly delivered in people’s homes, but also in community hospitals, care facilities and clinics.

Healthcare Leadership





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Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health (DPH) for Leicestershire and Rutland, is one of NCCH's [Creative Health Champions](#), helping us to embed Creative Health at a systems, place and neighbourhood level. He is interested in how creative activity can support the wider determinants of health, as this appears across all his policies. Mike would like to see the Creative Health community develop its promotion, stating in clear terms how creative practice is better than other provisions.

Rob Howard, Director of Public Health for Leicester City, is also a member of the NCCH Champions Network. He is interested in how creativity can directly benefit people's health & wellbeing, along with other indirect benefits - for example by bringing people together and reducing isolation. He believes that creativity is important in how we reach people with health messaging - communicating in ways that are relevant, culturally sensitive and meaningful.



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**University Hospitals
of Leicester**
NHS Trust

Ivan Browne, previously the DPH for Leicester, now works at De Montfort University as a Professor of Public Health. In 2023, he was awarded the notable *CMO's National Impact Award*. Ivan is developing a Masters degree in Public Health, in which he hopes to incorporate learning on Creative Health. Additionally, he is an [Associate Non-Executive Director](#) at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, where he is passionate about finding ways to tackle inequality within multicultural urban environments.



Laura French is a Public Health consultant working under Rob Howard at Leicester City Council. In 2024, Laura represented the city at NCCH's roundtable event entitled [*The Place of Creativity in Public Health: Perspectives from Directors of Public Health*](#). She is one of the many health leaders featured, who is part of Leicester's Creative Health Network. Through the network, she is supporting her team to scope out possibilities for Creative Health, identifying suitable priorities.

The Public Health Team at Leicester: Mark Wheatley, Programme Manager of Mental Health, is interested in creative internships for young people from socioeconomic deprived areas, and the potential to set up an arts for mental health grants programme. Nazira Vania, Public Health Project Manager/ Freelance Writer, and Kate Huszar, Programme Manager of Social Isolation and Loneliness, work with Community Champions. There is the opportunity to connect to these champions to discover barriers to artistic engagement.



At this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) for **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's ICB**, board leaders confirmed that they are receptive to considering Creative Health activities and approaches, where there is quality evidence available.

Dr Nil Sanganee, Chief Medical Officer for the ICB, shared a range of examples for where Creative Health is valued in the system. This included singing for lung health and using the arts to reduce social isolation & loneliness.



NHS
**Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland**
Integrated Care Board

Jenny Goodwin, Deputy Chief Officer of Communications and Engagement at LLR ICB, is highly enthusiastic about the emergence of Creative Health. She believes a key area where Creative Health can be integrated into the ICB is through their work with Children and Young People (CYP). This comes after Leicester's recent CYP consultation, which gathered the perspectives of Children and Young People across the region. It is one of the largest in the country to adopt this approach.

Mark Pierce, Head of Population Management at LLR ICB, is receptive to Creative Health opportunities. Mark is particularly interested in how Creative Health might affect behavioural change for the benefit of health. He believes there is a place for creativity in healthcare recruitment, joy-focused promotional materials, waiting time entertainment, and anti-loneliness provision. Previous small grants have gone to singing for dementia, painting classes, and community theatre.



NHS
**Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland**



Alyson Taylor, Senior Transformation Lead for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities at Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB, is interested in incorporating Creative Health into her work. She carries extensive experience of partnership working across public, private, voluntary, charitable and not for profit sector at all levels of seniority. As a neurodivergent leader, one of Alyson's interests is the use of creativity in neurodiversity care and health promotion.



Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

Rob Melling, Mental Health Improvement and Transformation Lead, and **Helen Perfect**, Head of Service for Planned Care, have both held key responsibilities in the transformation of Leicestershire's Mental Health system. One of the initiatives they have run in conjunction with Leicester's Public Health team is the 'Getting Help in Neighbourhoods: Adult Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund'. This funded a range of community health provisions, such as Thrive Singing Café.

LOROS Well-Being Hub is a place designed for patients with life-limiting conditions such as Cancer, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Motor Neurone Disease (MND), Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD), and Heart Failure. Carers can also come, with or without the person they care for. At the hub, patients can share stories and take part in a range of activities, including arts and crafts, movement & music, and creativity therapy. The goal is to empower those living with illness.



LOROS

Hospice Care for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland



Leicester Royal Infirmary was one of the most recent locations to feature in our [Huddles programme](#) – an initiative which brings together artists, health leaders and recipients of health care to codesign service improvements. In Leicester, we used body painting as a facilitation tool to connect community stories of mental health with Creative Health leaders from the hospital.

Image provided by Emma Fay – the artist who led our Huddle facilitation.

Creative Health Specialists





Tim Sayers and **Lydia Towsey** are Arts in Mental Health Coordinators for Leicestershire Partnership Trust - delivering an NHS Arts in Mental Health Service – as well as coordinators at BrightSparks CIO - a community of mental health service users, volunteers and other interested people that use the arts to promote positive images of mental health and wellbeing. They run WORD! a poetry organisation that is co-produced with NHS. Together, they carry over 50 years' experience in participatory arts.

Standout Leader

Sallie Varnam is a particularly active leader in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS region. She is the Creative Health and Heritage Senior Project Manager at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL), as well as a Development Manager for BrightSparks Arts in Health CIO. Sallie's role entails working across strategic partnerships with universities, local authorities, cultural and VCSE organisations to develop and deliver creative health programmes to support health and wellbeing outcomes in staff, patients and the general public. She manages UHL's art and heritage collections and develops projects using these to support health and wellbeing outcomes in patients and staff. Sallie was amongst the first healthcare leaders to join the NCCH Champions Network and she continues to be to this day. She is an active part of the National Arts in Hospitals Network (NAHN) and the Midlands regional sub-group. Together with Dr Nuala Morse, Sallie is developing the LLR Creative Health Network.



Community & Creative Engagement in Health





Community Wellbeing Champions are individuals or organizations working within communities to support health and wellbeing. They help reduce health inequalities by ensuring service providers understand residents' needs and barriers. Their local insights aid the council in improving overall health outcomes and addressing disparities within the city. This programme aligns well with the values of Creative Health, empowering communities to contribute and stay healthy.

Community Connectors, was an initiative delivered by Mental Health Matters in 2024. It aimed to reduce isolation and loneliness, improve people's physical and mental wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. The team was embedded into neighbourhoods, helping to identify provisions, work with the community to identify gaps in what is available and enable the development of new community groups. Creative Health activities were included in these developments.



Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB) wants to create a genuine partnership with the voluntary and community sector, social enterprises, and individual communities. To help them to deliver this, they have co-produced a **VCSE Alliance**. By joining the Alliance, via their online platform, Creative Health practitioners can find contacts, funding opportunities and training, contribute to shaping priorities and improve the knowledge of the ICB.

An Overview of How Health Systems are Engaging with Creative Health in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

[Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS](#) can be considered an up-and-coming location for Creative Health. Over the past few years, we have seen a steady simmer of creative activity in healthcare contexts and an ever-present showcase of Creative Health values across community health initiatives. This activity has been emergent and not yet labelled under the banner of Creative Health. However, the presence of a [Creative Health Associate](#) has helped leaders to identify which of their activities fall under this label and where more evidence-backed Creative Health activity could support their healthcare goals in coming years.

As with much of the UK, the health systems in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICS region are experiencing a stretch in their financial resources. This can cause a barrier to commissioning new, innovative programmes and initiatives relating to Creative Health. However, the fact that there is enthusiasm across the different health sectors – including ICB, NHS Trust, Public Health, and Hospice Care – signals an opportunity for great things to come.

Alongside other Directors of Public Health in our champions network, the councils' Public Health teams have helped the Midlands to become leaders in [Creative Public Health](#). They are receptive to new ideas and partnerships in aid of prevention and health promotion. To improve the relationship between culture and the ICB, Creative Health practitioners are encouraged to join the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance, where they have the opportunity to access commissions and training, and shape the strategy of the ICB. Moreover, they can learn about the way that ICBs think and prioritise by attending ICB board meetings which are held in public.

Notably, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust manage a range of [arts in mental health projects](#) on an open referral basis, including arts, music, comedy, literature and spoken word sessions. People with severe and enduring mental health problems and particularly vulnerable or socially isolated service users are the targeted recipients.

Based on the interests of cross-disciplinary leaders in the region, I suggest that a particularly meaningful area to embed Creative Health in health systems is **CYP health, wellbeing and development**. There is opportunity here to showcase national leadership.



Images provided by Emma Fay – the artist who led our Huddle activity in Leicester

Cultural Leadership





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The Creative Health Network is a new interdisciplinary network which is part of the University of Leicester [Heritage Hub](#). It aims to promote interdisciplinary, community-based collaborations and share research resources across the Leicester/shire region. It fosters a membership of researchers, community and civic partners, patient groups, health professionals, arts organisations and creative practitioners. You can contact Nuala.morse@leicester.ac.uk for more information.

Graham Callister is Head of Festivals, Events and Cultural Policy at Leicester City Council. He is responsible for the management of the council's festival and events funding and driving the development of a new Leicester Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy. He also oversees the delivery of major city cultural events, such as the annual Diwali celebrations. Graham is interested in pulling together local partners to support the mental health of children and young people.



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Yasin El Ashrafi is a multi award winning mentor and entrepreneur from Leicester. He is the Owner of HQ Recording Studio, HQ Familia record label and a Director of HQ CAN (Community Arts Network) CIC. Yasin has a passion for putting Leicester on the map for music production. One way that his work links to the ambitions of Leicester's cultural strategy is in the development of a full music supply chain, to encourage more music to be made and distributed from local artists.

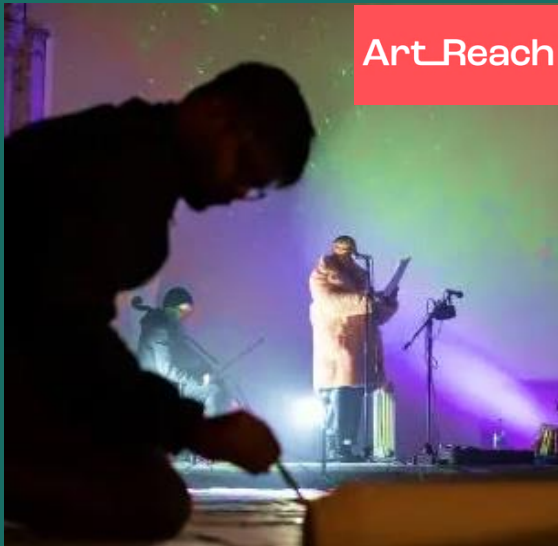


Tara Munroe is the Chief Executive Officer of Opal22. **Opal22** responds to community needs by providing programmes that break down barriers to accessing mainstream Arts, Heritage, and Culture for people of colour & the working-class. In connection to new Leicester's Cultural strategy, Opal22 will be delivering All Shades of Brown, a conference for creatives from the Ethnic Global Majority. This event offers young creatives in the Midlands a rare type of networking opportunity.

Pawlet Brookes MBE is the founder, CEO and Artistic Director of **Serendipity** Institute for Black Arts and Heritage. Serendipity's mission is to centre perspectives from the African and African Caribbean Diaspora by embedding them in cultural experiences for all. It will play a key role in tackling inequalities, in relation to Leicester's Cultural strategy. Pawlet has been recognised for her contribution to the arts and cultural diversity, making her a fitting leader.



Andrew Chitty is a Professor of Creativity and Innovation at De Montfort University. He was previously the Challenge Director of the Creative Industries Clusters Programme at UKRI – place-based innovation partnerships between businesses and universities. His knowledge and expertise can support Leicester creative businesses to access money via innovation partnerships with universities. These types of collaboration have been spotlighted in the Cultural Strategy.



The **Impact Network for Creatives (INC)** is a network by **Art Reach** providing support and development opportunities to creative practitioners and cultural professionals in Leicester. The INC aims to help people demonstrate their impact in the cultural sector and build their resilience. Support includes 'Go and See' cultural trips, one-to-one consultations, networking and training, and peer action learning sets. Their work will help the city to reach their workforce and industry development goals.

Dr Bertha Ochieng is a Professor of Integrated Health and Social Care at De Montfort University. She leads the Talent 25 programme - 25-year longitudinal study measuring the impact of early arts exposure on young people's life chances and future engagement in the arts. Her work has been [congratulated by UK Parliament](#) in Dec 2024. The work promotes creativity in babies and young children, through free workshops in Leicester, and will become a significant national creative health evidence resource.



Kay Hardiman is currently serving as the Director of Creative Programmes at **Curve Theatre**. Curve work with Community Ambassadors in their neighbourhood hub programme. Ambassadors help Curve to build a greater understanding of each community and their current challenges, enabling them to learn how to best support communities with their creative offers. Kay previously specialised in Children, Young People and Learning, making her well aligned to the goals of health leaders.



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Vi Dempster is the Western Ward Councillor, as well as Assistant City Mayor of Culture, Libraries and Community Centres. Having worked closely with Public Health during COVID and now working in culture, she has a good understanding of the crossover between health and creativity. At the launch of Leicester's cultural strategy, Vi said, 'Working with our partners, we want to showcase the city as a leader in the cultural and creative industries – and promote it nationally as a place to invest in.'

Peter Chandler, Head of Economic Regeneration at Leicester City Council, is creating a platform promoting local cultural stories. This links to Leicester's Cultural Strategy, which identified one of the city's weaknesses as their ability to shout out about and take pride in their creative and cultural outputs. Peter also supports the development of artistic business hubs, including LCB, Dock, and Canopy, and bridges business support from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



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Glenfield Hospital Museum, led by the Creative Health and Heritage Team, has been working with **Chris Jeavons**, from the University of Leicester, to help catalogue a health object collection and develop ways of using these objects to support patient wellbeing. The launch of the museum collection in October 2024 marked a key moment in putting a Creative Health venue on the local map. It will act as a space to host creative wellbeing workshops and Creative Health networking events.



Nick Owen is the Chief Executive of **The Mighty Creatives**, an award-winning charity providing creative youth services for the most unheard and under-represented young people in society. They exist to make social justice a reality for young people through arts, culture and creativity. As one of the longest standing Creative Health organisations in the LLR region, The Mighty Creatives showcase the possibility of the culture sector and carry great strategic knowledge.

BID Leicester is a business-led, not for profit organisation transforming Leicester city centre, making it a better place to live, work, visit, study and do business. The creative and cultural industries feature in their 2023-28 Business Plan. This includes the goal 'to support Leicester's cultural industries and arts festivals to grow audiences and build the city's reputation as a great place for culture through marketing initiatives.' This has included the delivery of a Light festival and city-wide murals.



Cara Pickering is Head of Creative Places at **The Audience Agency (TAA)**. TAA 'provide research, insight and data-driven tools, to help their clients to adapt for- and with- their audiences'. Cara works with arts, cultural and heritage organisations, providing project management and audience development support, via reports, presentations, stakeholder liaison, plans and monitoring. She will be supporting Leicester to adapt around its communities during the implementation of its culture strategy.



Pruga P is a filmmaker and music producer working primarily across Leicester/shire and Nottingham/shire. In October 2024, he helped NCCH to create our first explainer video, entitled [Creative Health Across the System: ICBs, Hospitals, Public Health and Combined Authorities](#). Following the completion of the Associates Programme, he will be further collaborating with Jane Hearst to produce specialised film and media content about Creative Health, including podcasts with local leaders.

Percy Emmett has extensive experience as a Specialist Trainer and Strategist in Creative and Cultural Industries. He currently works at De Montfort University as a Senior Lecturer in Enterprise and supports the launch of Creative Businesses via the award-winning [Crucible Business Accelerator programme](#). Percy plays a key role, locally, in upskilling the creative and cultural leaders of the future, contributing to Leicester being [one of the most popular cities in the UK to be an entrepreneur](#).



Images provided by Emma Fay – the artist who led our Huddle activity in Leicester

An Overview of How the Culture Industry is Strategizing in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

With the recent development of the Leicester Creative Health Network, we can hope to see greater joined up working, particularly in relation to research and co-design with communities and heritage institutions. At the launch of the network in October 2024, it had attained 80-members and this has since grown. This opportunity is further advanced, via access to Glenfield Hospital Museum as a site for Creative Health activity.

I anticipate a growth of Creative Health research across the three local universities – University of Leicester, De Montfort University, and Loughborough University – from talented researchers such as [Dr 'Funmi Adewole](#), [Dr Sabrina Mei-Li Smith](#), [Dr Nuala Morse](#), and [Dr Lyndsey Bakewell](#). This builds upon nationally significant projects, such as the Talent25 programme, spotlighted previously.

The launch of '[Leicester Leading](#)' – the cultural and creative strategy for Leicester – signifies an important step-change. A key feature that links to Creative Health is a focus on inequalities. At the launch, Jess Ticker from Arts Council England started, 'equal opportunity happens through clear intent, not by accident, and this strategy drives that'. This is particularly important to Leicester's unique population, where [no ethnic group is in the majority](#) and where [7% of the population are in the 5% most deprived 5% nationally](#).

The [Social Determinants of Health](#) are a key area of development across the health systems. Being able to vocalise the way that access to art and culture links to long-term health inequalities will be key to securing strong partnerships around congruent objectives. [All in Leicester](#) - a group of local people and arts organisations in Leicester that seek to improve accessibility in the city – will be key to this development.

Other interesting features of the strategy include the development of local supply-chains, enabling every stage of artistic creation to be accessible locally. Elsewhere, a signature festival, with demonstrable economic and social benefits to local communities. Creative Health practitioners who can position their work within economic contribution, community engagement / accessibility, and the development of local infrastructure will undoubtedly hold preferential outcomes for their work.

Another strategic feature was the ability to shout louder about the creative work happening locally. In a [recent post](#) by Adobe Express, Leicester was ranked higher than London for the number of arts events and festivals it hosts, with 1,749 compared to London's 1,521 - yet this activity is not nationally recognised in the same way that London experiences. PR and Communications will become

important in the targeted visibility of Leicester's cultural scene, via opportunities such as article promotion via [Leicester Gazette](#) – Leicestershire's independent, co-op newspaper. Moreover, independent practitioners - including those specialising in Creative Health – benefit from considering investment in more multi-media content, to showcase their fantastic work outputs.

Finally, other opportunities, mentioned during the launch of Leicester's cultural and creative strategy, include the [UKRI Clusters programme](#), where money can reach businesses via research partnerships with Universities, as well as the upcoming creation of a [Cultural Compact](#), who will lead the implementation of the strategy.

NCCH events have been well received in Leicester, including a [Creative Health information event](#) at Leicester Business festival and a [Roundtable discussion event](#), featuring researchers and Directors of Public Health from across the Midlands. I hope to see more events emerging through the partners that have started endorsing Creative Health from across both the health and cultural systems.



Images from the launch of Leicester Leading – the cultural and creative strategy

Useful Links



Local Health Strategies

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care System (LLR ICS): Function and Decisions Map: <https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Functions-and-decisions-map-v3-July-2023.pdf>

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board: 5 Year Plan (AKA Joint Forward Plan) 2023/24 – 2027/28: https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/LLR-ICB-5YP-FINAL-v5.0_FINAL_Signed.pdf

Better Care For All: A framework to reduce health inequalities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland: <https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HIF-BETTER-CARE-FOR-ALL-Final-03.02.22.pdf>

Leicester's Health, Care and Wellbeing Strategy, 2022-2027: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/content/leicester-s-health-care-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022-2027/>

Leicestershire Council Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2022-2032: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/leicestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy#:~:text=Strategy%20aims&text=enable%20independence%20and%20self%20care,the%20covid%2D19%20pandemic%20recovery>

Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Integrated Care Board: People and Communities Strategy 2022-24: <https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LLR-ICB-People-and-Communities-Strategy-2022.24-V2.pdf>

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) ICS: Embedding Research into Practice: https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ICS-Strategy-Embedding-Research-into-Practice_V5.pdf

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board: Clinical Strategy, version 7.1: <https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/LLR-ICB-Clinical-Strategy-final.pdf>

A Vision for Primary Care Transformation in LLR: 'One LLR' Our Primary Care Strategy, 2022-2025: <https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LLR-One-Primary-Care-Strategy-Final-V2.pdf>

Overview of Health and Wellbeing in LLR:

<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutlandhwp.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Overview-of-Health-and-Wellbeing-in-LLR-FINAL-Feb23.pdf>

Public Health data, reports and strategies page at Leicester City Council:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/public-health/data-reports-and-strategies/>

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Leicester City Council:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/public-health/data-reports-and-strategies/jsna/>

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Leicestershire County Council:

<https://www.lsr-online.org/leicestershire-2022-2025-jsna>

(Upcoming) A Women's Health Strategy for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, based on the National Women's Health Strategy for England .

Local Cultural and Creative Strategy

Leicester City Council: Leicester Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy, 2025 - 2030: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/1xepha1q/8015-lcc-cultural-and-creative-industry-strategy_web-1.pdf

Local Creative Enterprise Support

Leicester Museum & Galleries: Arts Support:

<https://www.leicestermuseums.org/arts/arts-in-leicester/arts-support/>

Art Reach: Impact Network for Creatives: <https://artreach.org.uk/inc/>

The Crucible entrepreneurship programme for DMU graduates and alumni:

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/business/grow-your-business/crucible/index.aspx>

Research Director for Creative and Heritage Industries at De Montfort University. Rachel works closely with Leicester's Cultural Quarter and Leicester City Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, leads on the Leicester Urban Innovation Lab:

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/academic-staff/business-and-law/rachel-granger/rachel-granger.aspx>

Resources from the Midlands Associate

Creative Health at a Glance: Core20PLUS5, Major Conditions & Falls Prevention:
<https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/Creative-Health-at-a-Glance--Booklet.pdf>

Creative Health Across the System: ICBs, Hospitals, Public Health, and Combined Authorities:
[Creative Health Across the System: ICBs, Hospitals, Public Health, and Combined Authorities](#)

The Creative Health Communication Framework: A Practical Guide for Impacting Mental Health and Wellbeing:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/the-creative-health-communication-framework>

Creative Public Health: A synthesis of opinion from experts in the field:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/creative-public-health>

Action Planning: A Method for Following Up with Creative Health Advocates:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/action-planning-a-method-for-following-up-with-creative-health-advocates>

Navigating Creative Health Advocacy at ICB Board Meetings:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/navigating-creative-health-advocacy-at-icb-board-meetings>

The Impact of Cultural Compacts in Promoting Creative Health Activity:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-cultural-compacts-in-promoting-creative-health-activity>

Workforce Wellbeing and Cultural Change, Via Creative Health:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/workforce-wellbeing-and-cultural-change-via-creative-health>

Anti-Racism and Ethnic Diversity in Creative Health:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/anti-racism-and-ethnic-diversity-in-creative-health>

The Place of Creativity in Public Health: Perspectives from DPH:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/the-place-of-creativity-in-public-health-perspectives-from-directors-of-public-health>

The Place of Creativity in Public Health: Researchers' perspectives:
<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/the-place-of-creativity-in-public-health-perspectives-from-researchers>

The Place of Creative Health in LGBTQIA+ Personalised Care:

<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/the-place-of-creative-health-in-lgbtqia-personalised-care>

Creative Approaches to Health & Wellbeing: A Neurodivergent Perspective:

<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/creative-approaches-to-health-wellbeing-a-neurodivergent-perspective>

Shining a Light on Social Prescribing:

<https://ncch.org.uk/blog/shining-a-light-on-social-prescribing>

(Coming May 2025) The Creative Health Communication Framework: A Practical Guide for Impacting Mental Health and Wellbeing – A Routledge Academic Text

National/International Creative Health Resources

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport : Evidence Summary for Policy: The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f9812268fa8f543f786b37f/DCMS_report_April_2020_finalx_1_.pdf

World Health Organisation: Health Evidence Network Synthesis Report: What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1ySgWxhmmd28MkG_KG1LyhS0FzF5nWG6e

Arts Council England: National Lottery Project Grants Information Sheet: Creative health projects: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Creative%20health%20projects%20FINAL.pdf>

The All Party Parliamentary Group and The National Centre for Creative Health: Creative Health Review: How Policy Can Embrace Creative Health:

<https://ncch.org.uk/creative-health-review>

NCCH: The Creative Health Toolkit: <https://www.creativehealthtoolkit.org.uk>

Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance: Creative Health Quality Framework:

<https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/sites/default/files/Creative%20Health%20Quality%20Framework.pdf>

Fancourt, et al. (2021) How leisure activities affect health: a narrative review and multi-level theoretical framework of mechanisms of action:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33581775/>

Building an NHS Fit for the Future – NCCH’s response to Lord Darzi’s Independent Investigation of the NHS in England: <https://ncch.org.uk/blog/building-an-nhs-fit-for-the-future>

APPG Arts, Health and Wellbeing (2017) Inquiry Report - Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing: <https://ncch.org.uk/appg-ahw-inquiry-report>

DCMS + Frontier Economics report (2024) - Culture and Heritage Capital: Monitoring the Impact of Culture and Heritage on Health and Wellbeing:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675b166a348e10a16975a41a/rpt_-_Frontier_Health_and_Wellbeing_Final_Report_09_12_24_accessible_final.pdf

Other Resources

The Collaboration Playbook: A leader’s guide to cross-sector collaboration:
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1ySgWxhmmd28MkG_KG1LyhS0FzF5nWG6e

Request form to add a service to Joy (Social Prescribing Platform):
<https://share.hsforms.com/17A-cBg6hRHughhAXHggMrA59qgq>



Think there is something or someone missing from this resource?

To keep the resource alive and relevant please add your own comments on social media, using the hashtag #CreativeHealthLLR and tag us using the accounts below:

Linkedin: National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)

Bluesky: ncch.bsky.social

This will enable health and cultural leaders to search online for community-led updates and will help us develop the local network.